

4.26
*The Sovereign Efficacy of Divine
Providence;*

Over-ruling and Omnipotently Disposing and Ordering all
Humane Counsels, and Affairs, Asserted, Demonstrated
and Improved, in a *DISCOURSE* Evincing,

That (not any *Arm of Flesh*, but) the right Hand of the
Most High is it, that Governeth the *Universal Scepter* of
this *Lower World's* Government.

Of Wheeling about the Prudentest Management of the
Profoundest Plots, of the *Greatest* on Earth; unto
such, Issues and Events, as are Amazingly contrary
to all Humane Probabilities, and cross to the
Confident Expectation of Lookers on.

As Delivered in a

S E R M O N

Preached in *Cambridge*, on *Sept. 10. 1677.* Being the Day of
ARTILLERY ELECTION there.

By Mr. *URIAN OAKES*, the late (and still to be
Lamented) Reverend Pastor of the Church of Christ in
Cambridge: And Learned President of *Harvard College*.

*Psal. 29. 10. The Lord sitteth upon the flood: yea the Lord sitteth King
for ever.*

*Isai. 41. 14, 15. Fear not thou worm of Jacob. I will help thee, saith the
Lord, and thy Redeemer. Thou shalt thresh the Mountains.*

*Rom. 11. 36. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to
whom be glory for ever. Amen.*

BOSTON In NEW-ENGLAND:

Printed for *Samuel Kneass*. 1682.

2972
74

R E A D E R

Christian Reader,

WHat thou art here presented with, is a part of the pious, & profitable Labours of that faithful Embassador of Christ Mr. **URIAN OAKES**: who having served his generation by the will of God, in the Gospel of His Son, and being willing to exchange this for a better World, did in his passage hence, let fall, & (as sometime Elijah his mantle) leave behind him this, with other useful Fruits of his well-studied, & elaborate Meditations: By which, and an amiable, exemplary, instructive, well-ordered, christian Conversation, he being dead, yet speaketh.

It will be a sin, & shame to such as knew, & had opportunity to enjoy him, to forget how great a price we had in our hands, while for a few years, we were permitted by Him, who walking amidst the golden Candlesticks, holds the Stars in His right hand, to have the heat, & help of so burning, & shining a Light: Alike blameworthy shall we be, and guilty of a greatly-provoking Evil, if we mind not how much we have lost, & are tremendously weakened by the fall of so principal a Pillar; and what cause we have to lament, that by an immature, & (as to us) a too too early Death, & dissolution, so bright-shining a Star is now no more visible; being removed & taken up to shine in a higher Orb. It is doubtless a sad Omen, & presage of a near approaching Night of blackness, & darkness, when our heavenly Father calls to put His children to bed. The removing & taking away of Shepherds, & principal Men from a People, what is it, but a casting down their Pillars, a plucking up their Stakes, a bereaving them of their Chariots & Horsemen, & leaving them without their Defence & Strength. Let not an unaffected, senseless stupidity under that late dreadful Dispensation, of

aprovoked God, give occasion to take up against us that sad Complaints. If. 57. 1. The Righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men (or men of Godlineſſ) are taken away, none conſidering &c. Surely, from the going away of ſuch, ſurvivors may conclude that Evil is coming. Let Noah be ſure into the Ark; Lot removed; and zealous tender-hearted Joſiah ſaid to ſleep in his bed of diſſe: and the appointed executioners of God's direful diſpleaſure, Elements & Enemies, ſhall immediately ſet upon & aſſault to their conſuſion, a People ripe for ruine. Oh but we were wiſe to lay to heart & Conſider!

The earthly Worth, & rare Accompliſhments of the (now bleſſed) Author, none but ſuch as knew Him not, or envied Him, can, or will deny. The rare Beauties, & Sweets of Nature, Learning, and Grace which the Great God had endowed, & adorned Him with, were ſuch, & ſo attractive, that nothing but unacquaintance diſingenuity, & prejudice could ſecure from being captivated, and held faſt in the pleaſant bonds of Love, & Delight. Had all the Art, and Grace He was filled, & furniſhed with, been runned up into an ill-ſcented Cask, tainted with Haughtineſſ, Peeviſhneſſ, & Vanitie, their Flavour, and delightſul Sweetneſſ would have been loſt in a nauſeous unpleaſancy. What He was to my ſelf, I cannot without renewing my grief, expreſs; Onely I ſhall ſay, He was (what is rare, & hard to be found in this lower World) a delightſul, loving, profitable, faſt & faithſul Friend: Being gone, I cannot forbear following wiſh David's Elegie, & Complaint for his beloved Jonathian; I am diſtreſſed for thee my dear Brother, very pleaſant haſt thou been unto me: but, The Lord liveth, & bleſſed be my Rock; and let the God of my Salvation be exalted. Amen.

The deſigne of this Sermon, as left by the Author written with his own Hand, now Published in Print, is to vindicate the Glory of the bleſſed God in His All-ruling, Wonder-working Providence as ſoveraignly diſpoſing the Iſſues, & Events of all humane Counſels, & Affairs. The moſt High doth too oft Suffer, (as to His Declarative Glory) even from His deareſt & beſt Servants: For they be clogged, & cumbered with the troubleſome remain-ers

of Ignorance, Atheisme, Unbelief, Carnal Reason, &c. While we are too intent in gazing upon the Living Creatures, and the dreadful Wheels, (which by their swift, and whirling Motion do oft raise a Cloud of dust) we soon lose the sight of Him who sits above upon the Throne, overruling, and Working all things according to the Counsell of his own Will. We are apt to be too fearful, and distrustful in our Entrance upon, and too forgetful of God in the Issues of great and doubtful Affairs; quicker of sight to discover an host of Aramites, than to discern an Army of Angels, like him 2 Kings, 6. 15, 16, 17. and more ready to give too much to Creatures, than to ascribe unto God His due Judg. 7. 2 — 6. Prevention of, and help against Evils, so prejudicial to our selves and dishonourable to God, was the aim of the Author in this ensuing seasonable, and serious Discourse; worthy to be perused by all unto whose hands it may come: The Face of Affaires, in the Times now passing over our heads, is such, and so agreeable to what TRUTH Himselfe foretold Luke, 21. 25, 26. as proves it (beyond dispute) needful to be perused, prayed over, and improved, unto a securing to our selves Comfort; and to the blessed God His ever due Glory. That it may be so, is the unfeigned wish of him who is

Thine in the Lord Jesus

JOHN SHERMAN.

ECCLESIASTES.

78-10-1-1

COLLEGE

ECCLESIASTES, IX. XI.

I returned, and saw under the Sun, that the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battel to the Strong, neither yet Bread to the Wise, nor yet Riches to Men of Understanding, nor yet Favour to Men of Skill; but TIME, & CHANCE happeneth to them all.

THis Book of *Ecclesiastes* is generally, and probably conceived to be a Penitential Discourse of *Solomon*, in his old Age, for the Satisfaction of the Church and People of God concerning his own Repentance; and for their Instruction & Direction, how to enjoy the best good of the Things of this world, and yet not to make them their *Best Good*, but estimate them as *Vanity* in this respect, and to steer a direct Course towards that which is the *last End* of Man, the Glory of God & Fruiton of Him, in the way of Fearing God, and Keeping his Commandments. As *David* after his great Fall Penned his *Penitential Psalm* (the 51. Psalm) So it is rationally conjectured that *Solomon*, his Son, being at last thoroughly awakened out of his Sensuality, Security, and Idolatrous Courses, or Connivences and Tolerations, by those great Adversaries, *Hadad*, *Rezon*, and *Jeroboam* (of whom you read 1 King. 11. 14. &c.) that God stirred up against Him, Penned this Book of *Ecclesiastes*, and left it (according to the Counsell of God) for a standing Monument of his publick Confession of, and hearty Repentance for all his Errors, and Miscarriages. The general Scope of this Book, is to shew us wherein the *Chief Good* of Man doth consist; which was the great Inquiry of the Philosophers of old; about which they had endless Opinions and Discourses, and could never hit the mark, nor arrive at

thorough Satisfaction, because they wanted the Light, and Direction of the Word, and Spirit of God. *Solomon* plainly tells us, that the *Happiness* of Man consists in the *Fear*, & *Favour*, and *Fruition* of God: and not in the Enjoyment of the *Honours*, *Profits*, or *Pleasures* of this World, or any good Thing *under the Sun*. And because man, having by the Fall lost God, is turned away to the Creature; & as it is originally inlaid in his nature to desire Happiness, so it is the Bent and Inclination of his corrupt nature to pursue it and seek for it in the Creature, and good Things of this Life: therefore He is very Large & Elaborate in discoursing the Vanity of all these Things, and their Insufficiency to make a man Blessed, or to make any real contribution towards the essential Happiness of Man, being never made to be the Chief Good of Man, nor proportioned and suited to the condition of the Soul of Man, & being made subject to Vanity, the greatest Vanity! as they were made for Man and put into his Covenant, and so fell with Him under the Curse, upon his Apostasy from God. The large Experience this Wise Man had of created Things, the many Proofs and Experiments, and curious critical Enquiries He had made into the Nature, and Use of sublunary, or subsofary Enjoyments, together with the Infallible Conduct of the Spirit of God, advantaged Him to discourse feelingly, and accurately, as well as largely from point to point concerning the huge Vanity of all things under the Sun. A great part of the Book is spent on this Subject. Among other Vanities that fall under his observation, this was One and none of the Least, that men of greatest Sufficiency in any Course, or Kind, meet with many unexpected Disappointments in their Undertakings. This He declareth in the words of my Text. Concerning the settling the Connexion of these words, Expositors are not at perfect agreement among themselves. Some apprehend this to be an Argument of the *Epicureans*, whereby they would demonstrate that all Things in the world are rolled up and down, tumbled and toss'd about by meer

Chance,

Chance, and fall out as it may happen, uncertainly and fortuitously. Because *the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battel to the Strong* &c. but the Ablest men are often cross'd in their Desigus, and defeated of their Ends and Hopes by these & those Intervening Accidents. Hence they deny the wise, overruling, all-disposing *Providence* of God; and make I know not what Imaginary blind *Fortune* the prædominant Deity in the World. But there seems to be no necessity of fixing upon such an Exposition and accomodation of the words; considering that they may well admit of a better, and more savoury Construction. Others think that *Solomon* hath respect here to what He haddiscoursed before, concerning the unsearchable & uncontrollable Providence of God, *Chap. 8, 16, 17. & Chap. 9, 1, 2.* And whereas He had said there, that *the Righteous, and the Wise & their Works are in the Hand of God*; He now shews the Truth of that Assertion by an Induction of Particulars. Others conceive it is a Correction of that Precept *V. 7, 8, 9.* of this Chapter, concerning the Leading a pleasant, & merry Life in the free, and comfortable Use of outward Blessings; which is here caution'd, and corrected by this Consideration, that there is a great Uncertainty of Events, nor do things alwayes Succeed according to a Rational Expectation: which renders it apparent that no man is secure of the Perpetuity of his earthly Felicity, or assured of the enjoyment of these Comforts, and of an even course of Prosperity, without many troublesome Rubbs, and Disappointments. Others judge He hath respect to the words immediately preceding *V. 10.* where He adviseth us *to do what we have to do, with all our might*, whilst Life, and working Time continues. *Vid. Voet. Select Disput. Theol. Par. 4. P. 739.* And lest any one should therefore presume upon a necessity that all Things should succeed unto him according to his Abilities, and endeavours, He subjoins this seasonable Admonition, That we should not trust to our own Sufficiency, and Industry in the management of any Business, to which there is no

sure Entail of Success; but depend upon, and attribute all to
 the gracious Concurrence, free Favour, and Blessing of God.
 But what ever may be conjectured about the connexion of the
 words; evident it is, that *Solomon* here acquaints us with a
 great Vanity under the Sun, which He had before intimated,
 when He said, *All things are alike to all, & there is one Event*
to the Righteous, & to the Wicked, the Good and the Bad, and
 here amplifies, and adds, that *swift, and slow; strong, and weak*
wise, and foolish have many times like success; and men of the
 greatest sufficiency, as well as others, are often disappointed.
 This *Solomon* returned and saw under the Sun, that is, when
 He took a view of the frame, and posture, and condition of
 Humane Affairs, among other vanities which He turned his
 eyes upon, this was one over and above the rest, a most un-
 expected vanity, which He considered over and over, That
 Events do not always answer the abilities, and endeavours of
 men, and succeed according to their Expectations. The Va-
 nity which *Solomon* discovered, and considered, and here ac-
 quaints us with, is, that it is not in the power of the ablest
 men, or best accomplished for Action, to effect their Designs,
 or *prestare Eventum*, secure, and warrant the Event & success
 of their Undertakings: And this is, 1. Argued, & proved
 by the Induction of five Instances in particular, to which ma-
 ny more may by parity of Reason be added. *The Race is not*
to the Swift. It is not in the power of the swiftest Footman al-
 ways to evade danger, or win the Prize by Running. *Nor is*
the Battel to the Strong. The Victory is not determined, or the
 decision of the warre made always on the side of the strongest
 and valiantest men. *Nor yet Bread to the Wise.* Many wile men
 are not able to get their Bread, or Livelihood in the World.
Nor Riches to men of Understanding. Many understanding
 men have not any success in their endeavours to gather Riches
 and get Estates. *Nor Favour to men of Skill.* Many times the
 most Skillful Artists, and Artificers, and the best Accompli-
 shed Persons find little Favour and Acceptation among men,

how

how deserving, and ingenious soever they be. 2. Illustrated by the *Antithesis* of a different, and the true Cause of the Determination of Successes and Events, signified in those words, *But Time and Chance happeneth to them all*. By which we are not to understand that the Determination of Events is reduced and referred to meer *Chance & Fortune*, as the *Epicurean* Philosophers imagined: but that the Counsel and Providence of God disposes and orders out all Successes, or Frustrations of Second Causes, casting in sometimes such unexpected Impediments and Obstructions, as defeat the Labours and hopes of men of greatest Sufficiency, which though they seem wholly casual and fortuitous Emergencies (and are so indeed unto men themselves) yet they are governed by the secret Counsel and effectual Providence of God. The Summe is, that no man, how accomplish'd soever, is *Master of Events*, or absolute Determiner of the Issues of his own Actions and Endeavours: but the sovereign Counsel and the Providence of God orders *TIME* and *CHANCE* to be an effectual Furtherance, or Hindrance of the Designs of all men, as seems good in His sight. The Observation is

Doct. *That the Successes and Events of Undertakings and Affairs are not determined infallibly by the greatest Sufficiency of Men, or Second Causes, but by the Counsel and Providence of God ordering and governing Time and Chance according to his own good Pleasure.*

I have endeavoured to comprize and grasp the Substance of *Solomon's* Intendment, in this Doctrinal Conclusion: and shall explicate and demonstrate the Truth of it (as God shall help) in the following Propositions.

Prop. 1. *Second Causes may have a sufficiency in their Kind, to produce these and those Effects:* an ability, a congruous disposition, or an aptness, yea a kind of sufficiency in order to the putting forth this and that Act, and the giving Existence to these and those Effects: not indeed an absolute and universal Sufficiency (which can be affirmed of none but Him that

s Allsufficient and Omnipotent) but a limited sufficiency, or a sufficiency in their *Kind*, and order: The Sun, to *shine*; the Fire, to *burn* that which is combustible; the Rational Creature to act or effect this or that in a way of *counsel*, and with *freedom of will*; the Swift, to *run*; the strong and valiant, and well-instructed Souldier, to *fight well*; the wise man, to *get his bread* to gather *riches*, to gain *acceptance* among those with whom he hath to do. This is no more than to say, that created Agents and Second Causes, may have the active power and virtue of causes, all that is requisite on their parts in order to the production of their peculiar and appropriate Effects, all that sufficiency that *dependent Beings*, and *second Causes* are capable of. And indeed it belongs to the Infinite Wisdom and Goodness of God to furnish his Creatures with sufficient Ability for the operations and effects He hath made them for: and so He did at *first*, when He made every thing good in its *Kind*; and whatever Defect there is *now* in this respect, it is the fruit & punishment of Sin. Though God is *able* to give Being to things in an immediate way, yet it is his *pleasure* in the course of his Providence to use Means, and to produce many things by the mediation and Agency of second Causes, and so gives *causal virtue* and ability to these and those things in order to the producing of such and such Effects. It is a good observation, that the Lord is pleased, not through any *defect of power* in Himself but out of *the abundance of his goodness* to communicate causal power and virtue to his Creatures, & to honour them with that Dignity that they may be his Instruments, by which He will produce these and those Effects: whereby He takes them, as it were, into partnership & fellowship with Himself in the way of his providential Efficiency, that they may be *Under-workers* to, yea *Co-workers* with Himself. Hence He gives them an aptitude and sufficiency in their *kind* in order to their respective operations and effects: though some have a greater aptitude & sufficiency than others. But without some degree of such *sufficiency*, nothing can deserve the name of a *Cause*, the very ef-

fence

sence whereof consists in its power, virtue & ability to produce an Effect. A cause cannot be a cause without an active power, or sufficiency to give being to this or that Effect.

Prop. 2. *The Successes, and Events of Affairs and Undertakings do ordinarily depend in some respects upon the Sufficiency of Second Causes.*

I do not say in the *Observation*; nor is it the meaning of *Solomon*, that Successes and Events of Affairs and Undertakings do not depend at all in an ordinary course, on the sufficiency of Second Causes. For this were to deny and destroy their causality, and to make nothing of their efficiency. Second causes have their peculiar Influence into their Effects, and contribute something to their Existence: and to assert the contrary, were to say that Causes are no Causes, and to speak a flat Contradiction. This would be to suppose that the Lord hath set up an Order and course in Nature, in vain; and given to Second Causes a sufficiency in their Kind, for Action, to no purpose; and to deny the ordinary Providence of God, which is that whereby the Lord observes the Order which He hath set, and that course of Nature which is originally of his own Appointment, whereby one thing depends upon, and receives Being from another. Though the Lord is pleased sometimes upon great and important Occasions, to leave the ordinary Road of Providence, and act beyond and above the usual, stated course of Things; and not to concur with, and shine upon the endeavours of created Agents, so as to crown them with that success which according to an ordinary course of Providence, might be rationally expected; yet it is not to be imagined that He should ordinarily dispence with the course, and methods of his ordinary Providence: For why then should it be called *ordinary*? God who is the Lord of Hosts, the great Leader Commander & Ruler of Nature, not only permits, but also effectually commands and causes his whole Militia, ordinarily, to move and act according to their Natures and natural Properties respectively, without Countermanding them, or

turning them out of their way. For (as I remember One argues) He will not shew such a dislike to his own workmanship, as ordinarily to cross the Order, and alter the course He hath set in the World. Therefore the meaning of the Text is not, that *Swiftness* conduces nothing to the winning of the Race, or *Strength*, to the winning of the Battel, or *Wisdom & Understanding*, to the getting of Bread and Riches; or *Prudence, Art, or Skill*, to the getting of the Favour and good will of Princes, or People: nor, that the Race is never to the Swift, or the Battel never to the Strong; no nor yet, that the Race is not more frequently to the Swift, and the Battel usually to the Strong, &c. For the Lord doth most ordinarily award Success unto causes of greatest Sufficiency, rather than Disappointment & Defeatment. Otherwise, it would be a very heartless, if not a foolish Thing (in the eye of Reason) to use means, or to think to get the Race by *Swiftness*, or Bread by *Labour and Diligence*, or Favour by *dexterous & prudent Behaviour*; or *Learning*, by *Study and Industry*; or to win the Battel by good Conduct, and Courage, and numbers of men. Yea then *Wisdom* would not be better than *Folly*; nor *Strength* more desirable than *Weakness*; nor *Diligence* more beneficial & available than *Idleness*, and *sitting still*. This therefore is evident, that the Issues and Events of Undertakings do in some respect, ordinarily, depend upon the Sufficiency of Second Causes; inasmuch as the greatest probability of Success (according to an ordinary providence, and in the eye of Reason) is ordinarily on the side of Causes that are most sufficient in their kind of Efficiency.

Prop. 3. *Second Causes, though of greatest Sufficiency in their kind, have not the certain Determination of Successes & Events in their own Hands; but may be frustrated & disappointed.*

Though the Successes and Events of Undertakings ordinarily depend upon the sufficiency of Second Causes; yet they are not infallibly determined thereby. Created Agents have not Events in their own Hands, but may be disappointed: they cannot warrant the Events of their Undertakings, or Successes
of

of their Counsels and Endeavours; but may be defeated of their Hopes and Expectations. Thus no man hath the absolute command of the Issue & success of his own Undertakings. He may be sure of this or that Event, if the Lord *Promise* it to him, or *Reveal* it to be *His Pleasure* to give such Success to such Endeavours: but he cannot be secured of it from, or by any *Sufficiency* of his own. He may, as a wise man, foresee & say, what in an ordinary course of Providence is rationally to be expected; but cannot warrant the Success of his Undertakings, or carry out what Event he pleases, to himself. His Prudence, and Providence, and Diligence, and *Sufficiency for Action*, cannot assure him of the *Event*, or determin the Success on his side. And there is that Demonstration of it, that created Agents of the the greatest *Sufficiency*, are sometimes disappointed. Two Things I would say here,

1. *Agents of greatest Sufficiency are subject to Disappointment, as well (I do not say, as much, or as ordinarily and often, but as well) as Agents of less sufficiency.* The Ablest Men in any kind may miss of the Success they expect, as well as weaker men. That Men of great Sufficiency in this or that way, may be defeated of their Ends and Hopes, *Solomon* from his own Experience, assures us, in the Text: and who is it that upon his own observation cannot set his Seal to what He asserts? He gives five Instances. 1. *The Race is not to the Swift*: not profitable, or successful to him always; but sometimes pernicious, & destructive. Many a good Runner runs Himself into mischief and Ruine. Thus *Asabel*, that is said to be as light of foot as a wild Roe, ran after *Abner* so fast, that he lost his Life in that overhasty pursuit. 2 *Sam. 3. 18 — 23.* There are Times when men that are swift would run from danger, and cannot: they have neither power to run, nor success in attempting it. *Jer. 46, 6.* Sometimes the Flight perisheth from the Swift, and he that is swift of foot, or that rideth the Horse, though it be at full speed, cannot deliver himself, *Amos 2. 14, 15.* It is not absolutely in the power of the swiftest man to escape danger,

or win the prize by Running. 2. *The Battel is not to the Strong.* There is in *Bello Alea*, the Chance of Warre, as they use to speak. There is, as it were, a kind of Lottery, a great Uncertainty in Warre. Great Armies are sometimes defeated by small and inconsiderable Forces; the great Host of *Midian*, by *Gideon's* three hundred men; the Garrison of the *Philistines* by *Jonathan*, and his Armour-Bearer. This hath been often observed in the World. Sometimes strong and valiant Men are overthrown by those that are in strength farre inferiour to them; great *Goliath*, by little *David*. Well might *David* say, as *Psal.* 33. 16, 17. *There is no King saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. An Horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.* There are Times, when the mighty Ones are beaten down, *Jer.* 46. 5. & *The mighty cannot deliver himself, or the strong strengthen himself, but the courageous among the mighty is put to flight,* *Amos* 2. 14, 16. Sometimes the strong melt like water at approaching danger, and the stouthearted are spoiled and sleep their sleep, and the men of might cannot find their hands, to make the least Defence, or Resistance, *Psal.* 76. 5.

3. *Bread is not to the Wise.* Wise men are not able to get their Livelihood, but have much adoe to make a shift to get a bare Subsistence in the world; and, it may be, are forc'd to beg for it, or be beholding to the Charity of others. There have been strange Instances of very wise, and worthy Persons, that have been reduced to such a Condition. Some of you know the famous Story, *Dare Obolum*, or (as others have it) *Panem Belisario.* *David* was put to beg his Bread of *Nabal*, 1. *Sam.* 25. & *Paul* was often in Hunger and Thirst, 2 *Cor.* 11. 27.

4. *Riches are not to men of Understanding.* Sometimes indeed, wise men get Estates and gather Riches; and one would think they should be best accomplish'd for it: and yet it so falls out, that some understanding Men cannot thrive in the World and grow rich, notwithstanding all their Endeavours. So it

is, that many men of great Understanding and rational Fore-castings and Contrivances to gather wealth, though they lay out their Parts and their Hearts this way, and would be rich, yet they cannot, but are strangely defeated. You read of the poor wise man, *Eccles. 9. 15.* Many men of great Understandings are too wise, and of too great Spirits to labour after wealth; or if they do, their designs are unsuccessful. 5. *Favour is not to men of Skill.* Many very wise, and knowing, & skillful men, and experienced in Affairs, and prudent also in their Deportment, yet cannot get, or keep the *Favour* of Princes or People. Some Expositors on the Place, instance in *Joseph*, that was envied, and hated, and sold by his Brethren, & also lost the favour of *Potiphar* (though He managed the Affairs of his House prudently and prosperously, and deserved well at his Hands) and was cast into Prison by him. *David*, that was hated and persecuted by *Saul*, *Daniel*, that was cast into the Lions Den, though an excellent Spirit was found in Him, and great Prudence and Faithfulness in managing the Affairs of the Empire; and before that, though He had been in great Favour and Esteem in *Nebuchadnezzar's* time, yet afterwards in the Reign of *Belshazzar*, He lived obscure, and as it were buried at Court, as Mr. *Cartwright* gathers from *Dan. 5. 11, 12, 13.* Many wise, and learned, and Ingenious Men cannot get the Favour of men, or keep it, when they have. The poor wise man delivered the City, and yet no man remembered that same poor man, *Eccles. 9. 15.* *Belisarius* (whom I mentioned before) was a most prudent, experienced, faithful General under the Emperour *Justinian*, that had won Him many Battels, reduced many Cities & Countreys to his Obedience and approved Himself for a most loyal, and worthy Subject, & yet after all his Services, even in *this* Emperour's Time, was through Envy, falsely accused, for ought appears by the Story, had his Eyes put out, and was forced to Rand daily in the Temple of *Sophia*, where He held out his wooden dish, begging his Bread, and using those words, *Give a little Bread to*

Belsharius, whom his Virtue & Valour hath raised, and Envy depressed, & cast down again. Other Scripture Testimonies and Instances, besides those in the Text, might be produced, if it were needful. But every observing man's experience may furnish him with Demonstrations of this Truth, *That Agents of greatest Sufficiency among men are subject to Disappointments, as well as those of less Sufficiency.* Again,

2. *Agents of little, or no Sufficiency, succeed sometimes in their Undertakings, when those of greater Sufficiency, miscarry & meet with Disappointment.* There is many times one Event to both as *Solomon* speaks *Eccl. 9. 2.* when the ablest Agents are frustrated, as well as the weakest: and there is sometimes a better Event to weaker Agents, & Instruments; they prosper in their way, when abler men are disappointed. The Race is sometimes to the Slow, and the Swift lose the Prize. The Battel is sometimes to the Weak; and the Strong are put to flight: as we have many Instances both in Scripture and common History. Weak and simple people have bread enough sometimes, when wise men are in want of their daily bread. *Nabal* had good store, when *David* was hard put to it. Men of shallow heads grow rich and get great Estates, when men of understanding can thrive at no Hand. *Solomon* tells us of the poor wise man; and our Saviour in that Parable, *Luk. 12. 16, 20.* tells us of a rich Fool. It is ordinarily seen in the World, that the thriving men in Estates, are none of the most understanding & judicious. Many a man hath this world-craft, that yet is a man of no deep or solid Understanding. So, many weak, worthless, ignorant, empty Persons find Favour with Princes and People: when men of Skill, & Learning, & great worth are neglected and despised. This is an Evil under the Sun, & an Error that proceeds from the Ruler, a great miscarriage in Government, that *Folly is set in great dignity* (Fools are favoured and advanced) and the Rich, i. e. men of rich Endowments for Wisdom and Piety, sit in low places, i. e. are depressed and discountenanced; *Servants are upon Horses, men of poor*

poor servile Spirits and Conditions, are set up and honoured, and Princes, i. e. men of great worth, walking as Servants upon the Earth. Eccl. 10. 5, 6, 7. So that it appeares plainly, that Success doth not alwayes wait upon the Countels and Actions of Persons of great Sufficiency; but they may suffer Disappointment, when others are prosperous: Which demonstrates that the Issues and Events of Undertakings and Affairs are not determined infallibly by the Qualifications & accomplishments of created Agents, and Second Causes.

Prop. 4. *The Defeat & Disappointment of Agents of great Sufficiency in their kind, is from the Hapning of Time & Chance unto them.*

Some read it (and the Original will bear it) *because*, or *for* Time and Chance happeneth to them all. For Explication.

1. By *Time*, understand not barely the *Duration*, or *space* of Time, which hath no such determining Influence into humane Affairs. But *Time so & so Circumstanced*. Time is sometimes as much as a special *Season* or *Opportunity*, when there is a concurrence of Helps, means, and advantages for the furthering the Designs and undertakings of men. By *Time* sometimes, we are to understand such a *Nick*, or *Juncture* of time, wherein there is a coincidence of Difficulties, disadvantages, & hindrances to the effecting of any Business. And this seems the meaning of *Solomon* in the Text. An adverse or *evil Time*, Eccl. 9. 12. Sometimes the Times favour the Enterprizes of men; Sometimes they frown upon them. At one time, wise and good men stand up for the Defence of their Country and Liberties thereof, and prosper in it; the Times favour them, there is a concurrence of all manner of Furtherances and advantages; at another time, they may endeavour it, and the Times frown upon them, the Spirit and Humour of the People is degenerated; and they swim against the stream, & are lost in the Attempt. And we say, *Such a Man was worthy of better Times*, had been a brave man, if He had lived in better Times, his worth had been more known and prized, and He would have

had better success. So when the Time of Judgment upon a People, is come, then wrath ariseth against them without remedy, and then the *strong man* may fight for the defence of such a Country, and the *wise man* endeavour to deliver the City: but all in vain, they shall miscarry in the Undertaking. *Aben Ezra* (as *Mercer* tells us) referres this to the *Conjunctions*, and *Aspects* of the Starres, by which He apprehended these inferior Things were governed. We are sure there are certain Periods, and Revolutions of Time, respecting the Prosperity, or Adversity of Nations, Countries, Cities, Churches, Families, Persons. As Time is set to all the Successes, so to all the Defeats and disappointments of men; and when this Time comes, no Sufficiency of man can withstand Disappointments.

2. By *Chance*, Understand contingent and casual Events. Many things fall out between the *Cup*, and the *Lip*; or otherwise than expect or imagine, or can possibly foresee. Some Event chops in, and interposeth unexpectedly, to cross a man's Designs, & defeat his Hopes & rational Expectations. When *Saul* and his men were compassing *David* and his men, and ready to take them, then comes a Messenger to *Saul*, saying, *Haste & come: for the Philistines have invaded the Land.* 1 Sam. 23. 27. When *Haman* had plotted the Ruine of the *Jews*, and brought his Design near to an Issue, then the King cannot sleep but calls for the Book of the Records of the Chronicles, and they read to Him of the good Service of *Mordecai*, in discovering the Treason that was plotted against his Person, and one thing falls in after another, to defeat *Haman's* cruel design, and ruine the whole fabrick of his strong-built, and almost perfected Contrivance. In this sence *Time* and *Chance* happens to men of greatest Sufficiency, which they cannot either foresee, (*Eccle* 9. 12.) or prevent, or help themselves against them when they come upon them: and hereby their Counsels, and Undertakings are defeated and ruined sometimes.

Prop. 5. *Time and Chance which happens to men in the way of their Undertakings, is effectually ordered & governed by the Lord, God*

God is the Lord of Time, and Orderer, and Governour of all Contingences. Time and Chance that further or hinder the Designs of men, are under the Rule and Management of the Lord. His Counsel sets the *Times*, appoints the *Chances*; His Providence dispenses the *Times*, and frames the *Chances*, that befall men. The Lord hath in his own power the Dispensation of *Times*, Eph. 1. 10. *The Times and Seasons He hath put in his own power*, Act. 1. 7. He hath such a Dominion over the Times, that *He changeth Times and Seasons*, according to his own pleasure. Dan. 2. 21. *My Times* (saith David, Ps. 31. 15. *are in thy Hands*). He means the state and condition of his *Times*, his Prosperities, and Adversities; his Successes, and Disappointments; and universally, whatever should befall him in the Times that should pass over Him. Moreover, all the Chances that happen to men, as the Scripture but now mentioned shews, are in the Hand of God. *My Times* i. e. the Chances of my Times. No Contingency, or Emergency, or Accident so casual, but it is ordered & governed by the Lord. The Arrow that was shot at a venture, and smote *Ahab* throw the joints of his Harnes, was directed at him by the Hand of God. So in that case of Man-slaughter, and killing a man casually, as if a man be hewing Wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the Axe, to cut down a Tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his Neighbour, that he die, Deut. 19. 5. God is said in that case, to *deliver* that man that is slain, *into his hand*, Exod. 21. 13. God ordereth that sad event. All Casualties in the World, are guided by the steady Hand of the great God. *Thou* (saith David, Ps. 16. 5.) *maintaineest my Lot*. The Lord makes and disposes the Lot, or Chance of every man, whatever it is. He hath appointed all Times and Chances in his *Eternal* Counsel; and in *Time* executes accordingly, in the course of his Providence.

Prop. 6. *The great God hath the absolute and infallible Determination of the Successes and Events of all the Operations & Undertakings of created Agents & Second Causes, in his own Power.*

His Counsel and soveraign Will appoints what they shall be, and his Providence (which is not determined by any Second Cause: but is the Determiner of them all) Executes accordingly. And it must needs be so, if you consider these two Particulars,

1. *God is the Absolute First Cause, and Supream Lord of all.* Of Him, and to Him, and through Him are all Things, *Rom. 11. 36.* He that understands any thing of God indeed, knows this to be a Truth. Here we might be large; as they that are acquainted with the Doctrine of *Creation* and *Providence*, in *Conservation* and *Gubernation* of all Things, will readily apprehend: for here we might shew you, 1. That God is the absolute first Cause of all the causal power and virtue that is in Creatures. He gives them power to act, furnisheth them with a Sufficiency for their Operations. He gives Swiftnes to the Runner; Skill, and Strength, and Courage, to the Souldier.

2. That He supports, and continues the active power of the creature. He continues Swiftnes, Wisdom, Strength, Courage, as He pleaseth. If He withdraw, all is gone. The Swift is lame, or slow-footed, the Strong is weak & timorous, the Wise is foolish and befotted, the man of Skill, is a meer Bungler at any thing.

3. That He doth by a *previous Influx* excite and stirre up, and actuate the active power of the Creature, and set all the wheels agoing. For the most operative, active created Virtue, is not a *pure Act*: but hath some *Potentiality* mixed with it, and therefore cannot put forth it self into Action, unless it be set agoing by the *first Cause*. And the creature cannot be the absolute *first Cause* of any *physical action*. In Him we live, and move, *Act. 17. 28.* Again.

4. That He determines and applyes Second Causes to the Objects of their Actions. When they stand, as it were, *in Bivio*, as it is said of *Nebuchadnezzar*, when he was marching with his Army He stood at the parting of the way, at the head of the two wayes, to use *Divination*, as doubting which way he had best to march; whether to *Jerusalem*, or some other way, *Ezek. 21. 21, 22.*

Then

Then the Lord casts the Scale and the Lot, & determines them this way, and not another. He doth not only stir up Second Causes to act at large, and set them agoing, and leave it to their own Inclination, whither they shall go, & what they shall do : but He leads them forth, and determines them to this, or that Object. 5. That He *cooperates*, and works jointly with Second Causes, in producing their Effects. As He *predetermines* Second Causes, so He *concurres* with them in their Operations. And this *Pradetermination*, and *Concursus* is so necessary, that there can be no real Effect produced by the Creature without it. And it is a Truth also, that when God Improves Second Causes for the production of any Effect, He so *concurres* with them, that He doth withall most immediately, intimously, and without Dependence upon these Causes by which He acts, produce the *Entity*, or *Esse* of the Effect. If this be considered, it will appear that created Agents, are as it were, God's Instruments, that act as they are acted by Him, and cannot move of themselves. The busy, bustling, proud *Affyrian* was so, *Is. 10. 15.* 6. That all the *Ataxy*, *Disorder*, *Irregularity*, *moral Evil* that is found in the Actions of Rational Agents, is by His *Permission*. If it were not the Pleasure of God to permit it, no Sin should be in the World, nor in the Actions of Men. Though there is no *Legal Permission*, or allowance of it; (for the Law of God forbids it) yet there is a *Providential Permission* of it. God could have kept it out of his World. 7. That He *limits* and *sets Bounds* to the Actions of Second Causes : what they shall do, and how farre they shall proceed in this or that way. He set bounds to Satan, when he had Commission to afflict *Job*. He limits, and restrains the Eruptions of the Wrath & Rage of the Churches Adversaries, *Pf. 76. 10.* He sets bounds to the sinfull Actions of Men : He regulates and governs all the Actions of Second Causes, as to time, place, degrees, and all manner of Circumstances. He is not the *Author* : but He is the *Orderer* of Sin it self. 8. That He *serves Himself*, and his own Ends of all Second Causes. He makes them all in all their Operations *subservient*

Servient to his own Designs : and that not only natural, but rational Agents, that act by Counsel. And not only such of them as are his professed willing Servants. Many serve God's ends beside their Intentions, and against their wills. I will do this and that saith God, by the *Assyrian*, *howbeit he meaneth not so*, Is. 10. 6, 7. Wicked men and Devils do God's will against their own will, and beside their Intentions. *I thought Evil against me* (saith Joseph to his Brethren) *but God meant it for good &c.* Gen. 50. 20. God elicits what good He pleases out of the actions of his Creatures. Whatever this or that Agent proposeth to himself, yet God alwayes attaineth His Ends. He serves Himself of the very Sins of his Creatures, and brings good out of them. He makes that which is not *Bonum honestum*, to be *Bonum conducibile* : and though Sin is not good; yet, as God orders the matter, it is good, in order to many holy Ends, that Sin should be in the World, as *Austin observes*.

9. *That He useth means in themselves unfit, and improves Agents of themselves insufficient, to bring about his own Purposes & produce marvellous Effects.* Yea, and it is as easy with Him to do any thing by weak and insufficient, as by the ablest & most accomplished Instruments. *There is no restraint to the Lord to Save by many, or by few.* 1 Sam. 14. 6. *It is nothing with Him to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power.* 2 Chron. 14. 11. Despicable Instruments, sometimes, do great Things in His Hand. 10. *That He renders the ablest means ineffectual, and the Undertakings of the most sufficient Agents unsuccessful, when He pleases.* He hath a Negative Voice upon all the Counsels and Endeavours, and Active Power of the Creature. He can stop the Sun in its course, and cause it to withdraw its shining; He can give check to the Fire, that it shall not burn; & to the hungry Lions, that they shall not devour : and He can order it so, that the men of might shall sleep their sleep, and not find their Hands. He can break the Ranks of the most orderly Souldiers, take away courage from the stoutest hearts, send a pannick Fear into a mighty Host, and defeat the Counsels

268
sels of the wisest Leaders and Conducters. He can blow upon, and blast the likeliest Undertakings of the ablest Men. In a word: the Lord being the Absolute First Cause, and supream Governour of all his Creatures, and all their Actions, though He hath set an Order among his Creatures, this shall be the cause of that effect, &c. yet He himself is not tied to that Order; but Interrupts the course of it, when He pleases. The Lord reserves a Liberty to Himself to interpose, and to Umpire matters of Success and Event, contrary to the Law and common Rule of Second Causes. And though He ordinarily concurrerth with Second Causes according to the Law given and Order set, yet sometimes there is in his Providence a Variation and Digression. Though He hath given Creatures power to act; and Man, to act as *a Cause by Counsel*, and hath furnished him with active Abilities; yet He hath not made any Creature *Master of Events*; but reserves the Disposal of Issues, and Events to Himself. Herein the absolute Sovereignty and Dominion of God appears.

2. *Otherwise, the Lord might possibly suffer real Disappointment, and be defeated of his Ends in some Instances.* He might be cross'd in his Designs, if any of his Creatures could doe what they will, without absolute Dependence upon Him. He could not be sure of his Ends, & what He designs in the World, if He had not command of all Events that may further or hinder them. If there were any active power in Creatures that He cannot controll; or any one event that is out of his Reach, and absolutely in the Creature's power, exempted from his providential Command, it would be possible that He might be defeated of his Ends, and so far unhappy, as to his *voluntary Happiness*, which results from his having his *Pleasure done* in the World, and compassing all his Ends in the works of Creation and Providence. God hath made all Things, ruleth all Things, and manageth all Things according to the Counsel of his Will, in a way of subserviency to Himself, and his own Occasions: which He could not do universally and infustrably,

D

if

if He had not the absolute and infallible Determination of all Events in his own Hand. *But His Counsel shall stand, and He will do all his Pleasure: Ps. 46. 10.* Thus much for the Explanation, and Confirmation of the Doctrine.

USE I. Of Instruction, in these Particulars.

1. *We see what a poor dependent, nothing-Creature Proud Man is:* Depending absolutely upon God for his Being, Actions, and the Success of them. Men of greatest Sufficiency cannot get their own Bread, or bring any thing to effect in their own strength. Let their Abilities be what they will (*Swiftness, for the Race; Strength, for the Battel; Wisdom, for getting their Bread, &c.*) yet they shall stand them in no stead without the concurrence and Blessing of God. Man saith, he will do this and that: but he must ask God leave first. He saith, To day or to morrow I will go to such a place, and buy and sell, & get gain; whereas he knows not what shall be: but it shall certainly be as the Lord will. *The way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps,* nor perform any thing that he purposeth, without divine Concurrence, or Permission. He hath not the Success of any of his actions in his own power; nor doth he know that any thing he doth shall prosper. One would wonder poor dependent man should be so proud! Any little thing lifts him up. When the Souldier on such occasions as these, is in his Bravery, in his military Garb drest up for the purpose, with his *Buffe Coat, his Scarfe, his rich Belts, his Arms, a good Horse under him,* O what a goodly Creature is he in his own Eyes! and what wonders can he do in his own conceit! and yet he hath as absolute need of God's Assistance, if he go forth to Battel, as any naked, unarmed man. He cannot move a step, or fetch his next breath, or bring his hand to his mouth, or leap over a straw, or do any thing, without help from God, *in whose hand his breath is, and whose are all his ways Dan. 5. 23.* It's strange to see how the hearts of men are lifted up with nothing! *O cease ye from Man: for wherein is he to be accounted of?*

2. *We see that there is, and there is not Chance in the World.*

Chance there is, in respect of Second Causes: (so some things fall out *κατα συντυχiam* as our Saviour speaks *Luk. 10. 31.*) but no Chance as to the first Cause. That piece of *Atheism*, and *Heathenism* ascribing things to *Fortune* and *Chance*, is hardly rooted out of the minds of men, that are or should be better instructed and informed. The *Philistines* when they were plagued, could not tell whether *God* had done it, or a meer *Chance* happened to them, *1 Sam. 6. 9.* They understood not, that what was a *Chance to them*, was ordered by the *Providence of God*. Truth is, Chance is something that falls out beside the Scope, Intention, and foresight of *Man*, the Reason and cause whereof may be hid from him; and so it excludes the Counsel of *Men*; but it doth not exclude the Counsel and Providence of *God*; but is ordered and governed thereby. And it is so farre from being *Chance to God*, that there is as much (if not more) of the *Wildom*, and *Will*, and *Power of God* appearing in matters of *Chance* and *Contingency*, as in any other Events.

3. *We see here something of the Power, and Greatness, and Glory of God appearing in his Efficiency, whereby He works all in all.* As He is himself Independent, so all Things have an absolute Dependence on Him. He gives Success, or causeth Disappointment, as he pleaseth. So that men are wholly beholden to Him for all the good they enjoy: for Victory, for Bread, for Riches, for Favour and Acceptance, for all. Nothing comes to pass without his Permission, if it be *moral Evil*, without his Concourse and cooperation, yea, Predetermination, if it be *moral or physical Good*, or *penal Evil*. In him we live and move, and have our Being. The Counsels of the ablest Statesmen, how rational soever, shall not prosper without him: Ministers, how sufficient soever, pious, learned, industrious, zealous, shall convert no man, edify no man, comfort & establish no man, without Him. *1 Cor. 3. 6, 7.* Though Scholars study hard, they shall make no proficiency without the Blessing of

God. The Merchant may trade, and project rationally, and yet shall not grow rich upon it, unless God give him success. It is God that maketh *Zebulun rejoice in his going out, and Issachar in his Tents*: that crowns the labours of Seamen, Merchants, and Husbandmen with Success. *Except the Lord build the House, &c. Ps. 127. 1. Training Days, Artillery Days*, tho' of great use, and very necessary; yet are all in vain, unless the Lord bless. He must instruct, and teach, and accomplish you; otherwise the help of your expert Officers, and your own endeavours to learn War, will signify nothing. And when valiant Souldiers come to fight; whatever Skill, an Strength, and Courage, and Conduct, and Advantages they have; yet they will be worsted, if the Lord do not give Success. We should learn hence to admire the Power and Greatness of God. It is a lamentable thing, that He that doth all, is thought to do nothing! He can work without Means, by insufficient Means; & blast the ablest Instruments: and yet is little minded in the World. God gives forth a Challenge to Idols, *Do good*, if you can, *or do evil*. *Isai. 41. 23.* It is God's Prerogative to do good or evil, *i. e.* not the evil of *Sin* (which argues Defect and Impotency; and comes not within the compass of Omnipotency to do it) but of *Punishment*. God only can give good, or award bad Success; and *Reward*; or *Correct* and punish his Creatures that way. *Who is he that saith* (what Man or Angel?) *& it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?* *Lam. 3. 37.* O see, and adore the Greatness of God in this respect! He works all in all.

USE II. *A word of Terror to the Enemies of God, even all Impenitent & Unbelieving Sinners.* Wo unto the Wicked, it shall be ill with him: for the Reward of his hands shall be given him. *Isai. 3. 11.* Their Persons, and Works, and Ways are in the Hand of God. That God whom they despise, disobey, & rebell against, disposeth of them, and all their *Times* and *Chances*; And *Who ever hardened himself against Him, and prospered?* *Job. 9. 4.* Let me tell you briefly, that either 1. *You shall be*

Un-

Unprosperous men, that nothing shall succeed well with you, as it is said of Coniah, Write this man childless, or bereaved (of Posterity, Lands, and Goods) a man that shall not Prosper in his days Jer. 22. 30. Or, 2. You shall prosper to your hurt. The Successes you have, shall undo you. A godly man may be unsuccessful in the management of his Affairs; but then his ill Success succeeds well to him; humbles him, weans him from the World, does him good : his Soul prospers by means of his unprosperousness. But your Successes and Prosperities make you proud, insolent, bold to sin, hardhearted, atheistical, and more rebellious against God; and further your eternal Ruine, Job. 21. 7 — 15. Because they have no Changes (but a constant, even, uninterrupted course of Prosperity) therefore they fear not God. Ps. 55. 19. Or, you shall prosper, not for your own sake; but for the good of others, Job. 27. 16, 17. Prov. 13. 22. And 3. The final Issue of all your ways and actions, and the concluding Event that will befall you, if you persevere in a course of Rebellion against God, will be most dreadful. In this Life, one Event may happen to the Righteous, and the Wicked, Eccl. 9. 2. But the last general great Event that shall befall them, shall be very different : for the event shall be, that the Righteous shall be saved and the Wicked damned. This shall be the portion of the cup of Impenitent wicked men, and the Event that shall be ordered out unto them by the Lord, that they shall be cast, both Soul and Body, into Hell. He that determines all Events, will at last put a sad Issue to the Prosperity of his Enemies. They must needs be very Unfortunate, & Unhappy men at last, that persevere in Rebellion against Him that governs Time and Chance according to his Pleasure.

USE III. A word of singular Incouragement to the dear People of God, that have an Interest in God through Jesus Christ, & walk with Him according to the Tenour of the Covenant of Grace. All your Times, and Chances, and Changes are in God's Hands; and all that befalls you, is under His Management, and of His Ordering, and Disposal. Then, Say to the Righteous, it shall be

WELL

WELL with Him: for he shall eat the fruits of his doings. Isa. 3. 10. God will give you the Fruit, the Benefit, the Success, the good Event of all your gracious Counsels, and Undertakings. He that hath the Master and Ruler of Events on his Side, must certainly do *well*. Though you are weak, and insufficient, in your selves, to do Duty, to walk with God in your course, to resist Temptations: yet the Race is not to the Swift, nor Battel to the Strong: God can, and will prosper your sincere Endeavours, and give in suitable supplies of Strength and Grace, *Isa. 40. 29, 30, 31.* And though you have many Enemies; Sin, Satan, World; and may meet with much Opposition, yet God that hath all Issues and Events in his Hand, being on your Side, nothing shall do you *real* hurt, *Rom. 8. 31.* You need not fear what Men, or Devils can do *against you*, seeing God that manages the active power of the Creature, is *for you*. They have no power, but what God gives and hands as He will, *Joh. 19. 10, 11.* & He will not suffer them to do you *real* hurt. *Nothing shall separate you from the Love of God in Christ; Rom. 8. 35 — 39.* Nay, all adverse Powers, though of greatest sufficiency to doe you hurt, and bent upon it; shall do you good, whether they will or no, *Rom. 8. 28.* And you shall be sure to conquer at last and have good Success. Indeed you may at present have many *particular* Designs and Undertakings, and be frustrated and suffer disappointment therein: but then, it is *good* for you to be afflicted, crossed, disappointed; and Unsuccessfulness is *really best* for you, & most conducive to the prosperity of your Souls; & you shall be sure of good Success, so far as Infinite Wisdom sees it to be good for you. And then however your *particular* designs and undertakings may be defeated; yet you have a general *Grand Design*, that is paramount & predominant; which is *The everlasting Enjoyment of God*: and if you reach that, you are well enough, and as happy as you would be: and the Lord, who is the Lord of Time, and Disposer of Events, and Government of his Creatures to their Ends, will not suffer you to be disappointed herein. You shall infallibly glorify God and enjoy

Joy Him for ever. This is matter of Comfort to the People of God in the worst Times, when it is with them as with *Jacob*, when he said, *All these Things are against me*, Gen. 42. 36. when none on their Side, Refuge fails, and no Means appearing for them. And indeed the People of God in this Country have had great Experience of this. What Deliverances hath God commanded! When few, and weak, and low, and exposed to the Rage of Enemies, God said, *Touch not my Anointed, & do my Prophets no harm*. The Salvations of *New-England* have been most apparently by the Lord's Governing *Time*, and *Chance*. This or that *Chance* or *Occurrent* hath fallen in in the very Nick of Time to prevent Ruine. It hath not been from the *Sufficiency* of the *Instruments* of our Salvation; but from the *All-sufficiency* of God, and His overruling Events wonderfully. Therefore let all that fear God, comfort themselves with this Consideration. And that you may take down, & be refreshed with this Cordial, Consider two Things. 1. *That Events are not to be judged or concluded of beforehand, from the Aspects of Second Causes*. As *Astrologers* conclude this or that shall happen, because of this or that *Aspect*; the *Conjunction* or *Opposition* of *Planets*, and *Positure* of the *Stars* & heavenly *Houses*: so do *Politicians* from the prospect they take of the *Combinations* and *Confederacies*, and various *Aspects* of *Second Causes*. Hence also God's People are discouraged, when they see the World combine, and enter into *Leagues* & *Confederacies* against the Church; now they conclude they shall be a prey to their Teeth, and swallowed up. And Enemies are ready to Insult over the Church, and to say as *Pharaoh*, *I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil*, &c. *Exod.* 15. 9. But this is a wrong way of judging; because *Time* and *Chance* happens, & God may turn all a quite other way. It was a good observation of Mr. *Caryl*, *When wicked men are nearest their Hopes, godly men are furthest from their Fears*; because then usually God defeats them; and their Insolence, & Confidence engage Him to do it. 2. *That the Determination of all Events, is in the Hand*

Hand of God in Christ, or of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Mediator is at God's right Hand, and hath all Power in Heaven, and Earth committed to Him; all Judgment, and the Command and Government of all Events. He governs *Time* and *Chance*. God is in Christ providentially ruling all Events; prospering, or blasting all Affairs, as He will. It is the Man upon the Throne above the Firmament, that gives out his Orders, according to which the Living-Creatures (or Angels) move the wheels of Providence, as you may see in that excellent Scheme of Providence, which is drawn in the first Chapter of *Ezekiel*. And it's well for Believers, that themselves, and their works are in the Hand of Christ; and that all Events in the World are determined by Him. *That* Christ, whose Person you love, whose Ordinances you love; whose Truth you love; whose Commands you love; whose Members you love; whose Appearing you love: *that* Christ, that loveth *you* a thousand times more than you can love *Him*, and loved you above his own Life, and will love you to Eternity, *that* Blessed Lord Jesus Christ hath the managing of *all* Affairs, and of all *your* Concerns and Undertakings in his own Hands. And therefore we may conclude that He will do all in *favour* of his Members, & it shall be *well* with them that fear God. *Eccl.* 8. 12.

USE IV. Of *Exhortation*, in sundry Particulars.

1. *Labour to maintain an humble Sense of your own Insufficiency to accomplish any thing, even in that kind wherein you seem to be most sufficient & best accomplished.* Let worthy Magistrates in Consultations for publick Good; Ministers, in their Ministerial way; Scholars, in their way, and Souldiers, in their military capacity, walk humbly with God. Truly God hath poured Contempt upon our military Men, our Artillery men, and good Souldiers. *New-England* hath gloried in these Things. Indeed, men of martial Spirits and Skill, ought to be encouraged: these Trainings and Exercises are very commendable, & by all means to be supported and countenanced: and it is pity that as in other things, so in this, the good Old Spirit is so much

much gone: These are not Times wherein the Nations beat their Swords into Plough-shares, and their Spears into Pruning-hooks. War, in some cases is *lawful*, and at sometimes *necessary*; and sure then, Learning of War is so also. But I fear we have trusted too much in Sword and Bow, and gloried in our Numbers; in our Arms and Ammunition; in our Trainings, in our expert Souldiers: and the Lord hath shewn us, that all these things are nothing without his Blessing: and that unless the Lord watch the Town, keep the garrison'd House, fight the Battel, all is in vain. We have seen that a despised & despicable Enemy, that is not acquainted with books of *military Discipline*, that observe no *regular Order*, that understand not the Souldier's *Postures*, and *Motions*, and *Firings*, and *Forms of Battel*; that fight in a base, cowardly, contemptible way, have been able to rout, and put to flight, and destroy our valiant and good Souldiers. And I must confess, that which determin'd my thoughts to this Text, was this very Consideration. I know not whether my Discourse upon it may seem so well levelled at the Occasions of this Day: But I know it is very proper for the Times that have passed over us, and the Dispensations thereof. And I hope the Gentlemen-Souldiers present will not blame any of us, if we cannot look upon their *Trainings*, and *Artillery-Exercises* with such an Eye as formerly before the Warre: nay they are to blame themselves, if they do not look upon them with another Eye themselves, considering how God hath humbled us in that respect. Whether my Discourse be pertinent to the Day or no, yet sure I am, it is a Lesson God hath been teaching of us by many sad Defeats & Overthrows by a despicable Enemy, *That the Battel is not to the Strong, or Expert, or Valiant; nor Success always answerable to the Sufficiency of Instruments; but determin'd by the Lord, ordering Time, & Chance according to His Pleasure.* Plain it is, that the Lord hath spoken this over & over in his Providence, and it is very proper for the Dispensers of the Word to speak it after Him, & inculcate the same humbling Lesson. Nothing's

more apparent, than that God's Design at this day, is to humble Magistrates, our worthy Patriots, to humble Ministers, Churches, expert and valiant Military-men, Merchants, and Husbandmen, all sorts of men amongst us. Who sees not that God's Design is to humble *proud New-England*? Therefore admit I beseech you, an *humbling Discourse* in an *humbling Time* and suffer this word of *Exhortation*, the drift whercof is, not to discourage from the use of Means, or take off your edge from military Exercises; but to press you to get & keep a due Sense of your own Insufficiency in your several Capacities, to do any Exploits, or accomplish any good Purposes of your selves. And may there not be need of an *humbling Word* on such Days as these, when there are such Solemnities, and the Hearts of poor men are ready to swell, and heave & be puffed up strangely, with great Apprehensions of themselves? Well, Be sensible of your Insufficiency to effect any thing, whatever your Wisdom and Strength be: that you cannot of your selves, win the Race, or Battel; get Bread, or Wealth, *Deut. 8. 17, 18.* build the House, or keep the City, *Psal. 127. 1, 2.* Truly we had need be put in mind that we are but *weak, sorry men*, that cannot make our own *Fortune*; but must take what God orders out to us.

2. *Depend absolutely upon God for all the Issues and Successes of your Affairs & Undertakings.* For you see the Determination of them is in His Hands. Though wicked men would shame the Counsel of the poor People of God (deriding their Course in this respect) because they have made God their Refuge (as *Pf. 14. 6.*) yet be not you ashamed of your Dependence upon God, nor either jeered, or affrighted and discouraged out of it. It makes for the glory of God, as well as your comfort, when you depend upon Him. Therefore, 1. *Make sure that all your Counsels and Undertakings be Lawful and Good.* Otherwise you cannot duly depend upon Him, and expect his gracious Concurrence. Indeed God may shine upon the Counsels, and way of the *Wicked*, in respect of *outward Prosperity*: And so

so He may give you Success in *wrath*, & for your greater hurt, when your Undertakings are *sinful*: but you have no Promise of his *gracious Concurrence* in that Case, to ground Faith upon. (2.) *Do what your hand finds to do, with all your Might.* As in the Verse before the Text. Be not slothful, or neglective of Duty, because of the uncertainty of Events. Though you have not the Issue in your own power, yet you are to do your utmost towards the compassing of your lawful Designs. Do your duty, or you cannot expect God's Blessing, and his determining Events on your side. Great Complaints there have been from time to time of the neglect of these *military Exercises*, even by those that have freely Listed, & solemnly engaged themselves to attend them; and that such Days are spent away unprofitably, little done to any purpose; as if they were Days to meet on, to *smoke*, and *carouse*, and *swagger*, and *disbonour God with the greater Bravery & Solemnity*. O make a *Business* of it, and not a *Play*. And in all your lawful undertakings, be serious & diligent. Uncertainty of Events should not hinder from Duty and Diligence. *Ecc. 11. 6.* 3. *Renounce all Confidence in Creatures, or created Sufficiency.* *I will not trust in my Bow* (saith the Psalmist) *nor shall my Sword save me, Psal. 44. 6.* Do not trust in *great Men* (they are *Lye*, *Psal. 62. 9.*) *Good Men*, any Men, they are *Vanity*. Do not make *flesh* your *Arm*, nor lay too much weight upon the Ability of any Instruments. Do not bear too much upon the sufficiency of Ministers to instruct, convince, convert, comfort and edifie: for *Paul himself was nothing, 1 Cor. 3. 6, 7 — 2 Cor. 12. 11.* Do not say, *Wisdom and strength are for the War* (as *Isai. 36. 5.* and therein we will trust: For Events do not always fall out accordingly. Let not the strong man glory in his Strength, nor the wise man, in his Wisdom, nor rich man, in his Riches, but in the Lord, *Jer. 9. 23, 24.* Do not trust in your own Wit, Art, Strength, Courage, military Accomplishments, Provisions for War, Advantages, or any Sufficiencie you have. Do not trust in any Qualifications you have, Natural or Acquired,

Civil or Spiritual. Do not trust to the sufficiency of received habitual Grace. When God said to *Paul*, *My Grace is sufficient for thee*: He doth not mean *habitual* Grace only; but *actual*, *efficacious*, *Assisting* Grace that the Lord was pleased to afford him, the *Epichoregia pneumatos*, additional Supplies of the Spirit, and *Increased*, as well as *created* Grace, which *Paul* was to trust to, and so might glorie in his Infirmities, and depend upon the Power of God that rested on him, *2 Cor. 12. 9, 10*. Do not trust to your *previous* Dispositions and Preparations, for any Duty. It is not in him that *wills*, or *runs*. Take heed of Self-fullness, and a Spirit of Independenci in this respect. Self-Confidence, and Creature-Confidence are inconsistent with a due Dependence upon God. 4. *Beg good Successes, & Issues of your Undertakings of God, in the Name of Jesus Christ*. It is one of the Characters of a good Souldier, *Act. 10. 2*. and I am sure it is of a good Man, to be a *Man of Prayer*. It were well if all our *Artillery* and *military* Gentlemen were men of this Character. It is well if none of you have come forth to day without solemn Prayer to God for his Blessing on the Occasions and Services of this Day. Some read thole words *Isa. 36. 5*. *Thou saist, surely Lip-labour is Counsell & Strength sufficient for the Warre*: As if *Rabshakeh* flouted good *Hezekiah* for his Confidence in God, and for saying that *Prayer* (which he scoffingly calls *words of Lips*, or *Lip-labour*) would be in stead of the best Policy, and Courage, and Preparations for Warre. But if this reading be somewhat forced, yet sure it is, that although Prayer to God must not exclude the use of other Means (for how can a man pray in Faith, that doth not also use all due Means in his power ?) to get the Victorie, and win the Day. Therefore when you come to these Exercises, beg military Skill of God: and when called forth to real Service, beg Success of Him. So in other Cases, Prayer is one of the best Expedients. Our Saviour hath Instructed us to pray for our daily Bread. Scholars should beg a Blessing on their Studies. *Bene Orâsse est bene Studuisse*. So for Favour & acceptance among men; beg

beg so much as may put you into a better Capacity to do the work of your place, and serve your Generation. When *Paul* was to carry a liberal Contribution to the poor Saints at *Jerusalem* (which was like enough to be very welcome) He begs the *Romans* to strive together with him in *Prayer*, that his Service might be accepted of the Saints, *Rom. 15. 30, 31.* *Pray* therefore in the Name of Christ, for the good Success of all your lawful Undertakings. Therein you will express your Dependence on God. 5. *Cast all the Care of Events & Issues of your Affairs & Undertakings, on the Lord.* Use all the good Means in your Hand, and then leave Events quietly with God, on whom all the Issues of things depend. *Commit your way to the Lord, and roll it off thy self upon Him.* *Psal. 37. 5.* Look to Him to direct thy paths to a good Issue. *Prov. 3. 6.* When you have done your Duty in the use of Means to compass your lawful Designs, and recommended all to God by Prayer, then trouble your selves no further; but *Cast your burden upon the Lord,* *Psal. 55. 22.* *1 Pet. 5. 2.* Take that Counsel, *Phil. 4. 6.* It is our work to take care our Dutie be done, and the Lord's work to take the care of Events. It was a brave Speech of that gallant Souldier, though none of the best Men, *Jothab* I mean, when he had set his Men in battel array, and used all the Skill & Policie he could, *Be of good Courage, and let us play the Men, for our People, and for the Cities of our God: and the Lord do that which seemeth Him good.* *2 Sam. 10. 12.* We must not govern the World; nor encroach upon God's Prerogative (which is to dispose of Events) by taking the care of them upon our selves. Be poor and weak in your own Eyes, and commit your selves & Concernments to Him. 6. *When you have thus done, then Believe stedfastly that the Lord will give you a good Issue of your Undertakings.* Though not that which you may desire; yet that which is best for you. When you have greatest Sense of your own Insufficiencie, and the weakness of Means; yet believe this, and depend upon Him for it according to his Promise, with whom it is all one to save by many, or few: weak,

or strong, to Convert and edifie by weak, or able Ministers; to feed his Children, and make them look fair and fat, with Pulse and mean fare, as well as with royal Dainties. This Depending upon God, excludeth *Presumption* on one hand; *Despair and Discouragement* on the other. And He that in the Sense of his own Insufficiencie, trusts in the Power and Grace of God, may say as *Paul*, *When I am weak, then am I strong.* 2 Cor. 12. 10. Oh then! Let us depend upon God, with whom are the Issues of all Affairs. Let our Honourable Rulers depend upon Him, in the management of publick Affairs: Let Ministers depend on God, without whom they cannot instruct the Ignorant enlighten the Dark, convince the Obstinate, awaken the secure Sinners, convert and bring any Souls to Christ, gather Israel, edify and build up the Faithful in the knowledg & faith of Gospel Mysteries, and in the Graces and Consolations of the Spirit. Let Merchants depend on God for prosperous Voyages, and good Success in their Trade and Commerce: Let Husbandmen depend upon God for their Bread & Livelihood more than upon their own Labours, and the Fruitfulness of the Ground. God instructs the Husbandman. *Isai.* 28. 26. and blesteth his Labours; and can soon blast them, as the experience of many Years hath sadly taught us. Let Scholars depend upon God for Learning, more than upon their Books, or Tutors, or Parts and Industrie, or any other Advantages. Let military Men learn to depend upon God. *The Lord is a Man of War.* *Exod.* 15. 3. He gives military Skill, and other Accomplishments, and Successes also in their Services and hazardous Undertakings. Let us all learn this Lesson, to depend upon the Lord, that orders out all Successes & Events according to His Pleasure.

3. *Duely Acknowledge God in all Successes & Events, and in all Frustrations, & Disappointments.*

First, *Acknowledge God in all good Successes and Events, so as to be Thankful to Him for them.* Whatever your own Sufficiencie may be, yet acknowledge God thankfully, as if you had
been

been wholly Insufficient: for your Sufficiencie is of God, and He could have disappointed notwithstanding. The ground of our Unthankfulness for all good Issues and Events of Affairs and Undertakings, is, because we do not see the good Hand of God dispensing all to us. We make too *little* of God, and too *much* of our selves; either by thinking we deserve better than God hath done for us (Hence a proud Heart is never thankful to God or Man) or by thinking we have done all, or more than we have done, toward the getting of this or that Mercy. We put our selves too much in the place of God; as if it were in our power to make our Endeavours Successful, and to give a good Effect and Issue to them, according to *our* Desire. We get up into God's Throne, and usurp upon his Prerogative, and assume that which is peculiar to Him, when we presume we can bring any thing to pass, or do any thing successfully in our Own strength. If we make our selves the only and absolute *first Causes* of our good Success; no marvel we make our selves the *last End* also, and deny God the glorie. O do not ascribe good Success to your own Wit, and Parts, and Policy, and Industrie, and say, my Nimbleness hath won the Race; my Conduct and Courage hath won the Battel; my Wisom hath gotten me this Bread; my Understanding hath heaped up this Wealth; my Dexteritie, and Skill, and Complaisance, and agreeable Conversation hath procured me the Favour of Rulers or People; my Parts or Study hath given me this Learning. Say not with the Vapouring *Assyrian*, *By the Strength of My Hand I have done it, and by My Wisdom: for I am Prudent.* Isa. 10. 13. Let not this be so much as the secret Language of your Hearts. Say not, as *Nebuchadnezzar*, *This is great Babylon, which I have built*, and so derogate from God that works all in all; lest He turn you a grazing, as He did him, with the Beasts of the Field, and teach you better Manners by some severe Correction. Do not *Sacrifice to your own Nets, and burn Incense to your Drags; as if by them your portion were fat, and meas plentiful* (Hab. 1. 16.) but ascribe all to God. There is that deep

Wickedness in the Hearts of Men, that if they get any thing by any Fraud, and crafty fetches, and overreaching of their Brethren, in a sinful way, they will be too readie to attribute that to the Providence and Blessing of God, and say, it was God's Providence that cast it in upon them; when they have been craftily and sinfully designing it, and bringing it about: but when they have gotten any thing honestly, by their Wisdom and Prudence, and Industrie, they are too ready to forget Providence, and ascribe all to themselves. See the Evil of this, and remember that no People in the World have greater cause of Thankfulness than we have to God, who hath governed *Time* and *Chance* on our behalf marvellously. O Bless Him for good Success, not only when you cannot but acknowledge your own *Insufficiency*; but also when you have apprehensions of the greatest *Sufficiency* of Second Causes. And *Blessed for ever be the Lord, who hath Pleasure in the Prosperity of his Servants*, Psal. 35. 27.

Secondly, *Acknowledge God also in all your Frustrations and Disappointments, so as to resent his Disposals and Dispensations towards you in a gracious manner.* We have met with manie Disappointments in the late Warre, and in other respects. We should see God in all. When He blasts our *Corn*, defeats our *souldiers*, frowns upon our *Merchants*, and we are *disappointed*, now acknowledge the Hand of God, Ordering *Time*, and *Chance* according to his Good Pleasure. Justifie God in all, and bear such Frustrations patientlie. When you have done your Dutie, be quiet, though the Event doth not answer your Endeavours, and Hopes. Take heed of quarrelling at *G O D's* Disappointments. Do you know VVhom you have to do with? *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because Thou didst it.* Psal. 89. 9. If we look at faultie Instruments, or at meer Chance onely, we shall be apt to murmur. It is the observation of One, *That the Reason why men are more apt to fly out into Cursings and Blasphemies for their bad Luck (as they call it) in those Unlawful Games of Cards, and Dice, than in other Exer-*
ci-

alles, that are governed by Art and Skill, arise partly from the very nature of those Games : because when they have tried their Lot or Chance over and over, and their Expectation is deceived, they think that that Power that governs the Lot or Chance, is Adverse to them. They cannot blame their own Art or Skill, when no Art can infallibly determine the Event; but curse their bad Fortune. And if we look at Disappointments, as our bad Fortune and Chance onely, looking no further, we shall be apt to fret and quarrel : but if we do indeed see God ordering our Lot for us, it may and ought to silence us. When Magistrates have done their Duty, according to the Law of God, and of the Country, and endeavoured faithfully to give check & stop to the Inundation of Profaneness and Heresy; and yet the bad Genius of the Times, and degenerate Humour of the People, and this or that Emergency happens, that frustrates the Success of their Counsels and Endeavours; truly they may sit down and mourn indeed; but yet humbly submit to the All-disposing Providence of God. When Ministers have laboured faithfully, and yet Israel is not gathered, and their Labours seem to be in vain; not successful in converting Sinners; they may weep in secret indeed; but yet patiently bear the Unsuccessfulness of their Ministry from the Hand of God. When Souldiers have shewed themselves valiant, and faithful, and done what they can; and yet are worsted: They must acknowledge God's Hand in it, and that *the Bassel is the Lord's*. 1 Sam. 17. 47. who governeth the Warre, and determineth the Victory on what side He pleaseth. All men have *Briers* and *Thorns* springing up in the way of their Callings, as well as Husbandmen; and meet with Difficulties and Crosses therein. Get the Spirit David had 2 Sam. 15. 25, 26. and so acknowledge God in every thing, as to submit humbly to his Disposals, even when they are Adverse, and cross to your Desires and Expectations.

Thirdly, *Be always Prepared for Disappointments.* Do not promise your selves Success from the Sufficiency of Second Causes : God may determine otherwise. We should be fore-

warned and forearmed, that we may not *Xenias that* (1 Pet. 4. 12.) strange at it when it comes to pass, or be dejected and discouraged. Events are not in the Creatures power. The Lord sometimes disappoints men of greatest Sufficiency, overrules and controlls their Counsels and Endeavours, and blasts them strangely. *Time and Chance* happens to them, If *Adam* had stood; though he would not have had the Determination of Events & Successes in his own hand; yet God would have determined them for him according to his hearts-desire: and he should never have been disappointed. But since the Fall, as no Man hath power to determine Events (which is God's Prerogative) so it is just with God that every man should meet with Crosses and Disappointments; and this is the Fruit of the Curse, under which all natural men ly: and as for the People of God; though they are delivered from the Curse of the Law, in the *Formality* of it; so that nothing befalls them *as a Curse*, how *cross* soever it be: yet they are not yet absolutely delivered from the *Matter* of the Curse, as appears by the Afflictions they meet with, and Death it self. And indeed it makes sometimes for the glory of God, to disappoint Men of greatest Abilities. When men do not see and own God; but attribute Success to the Sufficiency of Instruments, It's time for God to maintain his own Right (as Dr. *Preskon* speaks) and shew that He gives, or denies Success, according to His own good Pleasure: God is much seen in Controlling the ablest Agents; & blasting their Enterprizes, yea more, many times, than in backing them, & blessing their Endeavours in an ordinary Course of Providence. Herein the *Wisdom* of God is much seen. It is best, sometimetimes, it should be so, with respect to God's Int'rest and Glory. His *Power* also appears, in giving Check to the Ablest Instruments, and turning all their Designs another way than they Intended. His *Mercy* also to his People, is seen herein; for it is best for them, in some Cases, to be defeated and disappointed. His *Justice* also appears herein; in his correcting and punishing the Self-con-

fidest, sinful Creature with unexpected Disappointments. So that it is our Wisdom, to look for Changes and Chances, some Occurrents and Emergencies that may blast our Undertakings, that Faith and Prayer may be kept a going, and lest if such Frustrations befall us unexpectedly, we either fly out against God, or faint and sink in Discouragements. At the first going out of our Forces, in the beginning of the Warre, what great Apprehensions were there of speedy Success and ending of the Warre; that it was but going and Appearing, and the Enemy would be faced down: As if the first News from our Souldiers should be, *Venimus, Vidimus, Vicimus*. And several times after, great probability of concluding that unhappy War, and yet all disappointed, contrary to Expectation. VVhen there is therefore greatest Probability of Success, yet remember there may be Disappointment; and provide for it, that you may not be surprised thereby. This may be good Counsel to men of projecting Heads, that are wont to be very confident that they see their way farre before them: but they do not know what *Time* and *Chance* may happen: This may check the Confidence of Man, and teach us not to promise our selves great Things, or build upon this or that Event or Enjoyment for time to come. Labour to be prepared and provided for Disappointments.

Fourthly, *Fear God, and Keep His Commandments*. This is the Conclusion of the whole matter (saith Solomon, Eccl. 12. 13.) the Conclusion of the Book, and may be very well drawn from the words of my Text in special, and shall be the Conclusion of my Discourse upon it, *Fear God, and Keep His Commandments*. Oh! Fear God, that is the Lord of *Time*, and Governour of *Chance*, and Dispenser of all *Events* and *Issues*, and be sure to please Him in a Course of Evangelical Obedience. God hath the Care of *Events*, and we must leave that to Him: but our Care must be to do our Duty. And *To Fear God, and Keep His Commands, is the whole Duty of Man*. VVho would not fear Thee, O King of Nations? Jer. 10. 7.

The Lord governs Nations and Kingdoms, all the Affairs and Enterprizes of the Sons of Men: All their Lives, and Souls, and Estates, and VVays are in His Hand: And He can dispose of them, not onely for present, but for Eternity, as He pleases. All the Events that befall them, are ordered and governed by Him. Therefore be in the Fear of the Lord all the day long, and walk worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing. If your ways please God, your Enemies shall be at peace with you, or do you no hurt, if they would; but good, whether they will or no. Obedience is the best way to Prosperity. *Deut. 29. 9.* The Lord takes Pleasure in the Prosperity of his Servants, *Psal. 35. 27.* This was God's Promise to *Jeshuah*, *Josh. 1. 8.* While you are with God, God will be with you. *2 Chron. 15. 2.* and then you shall have Things prosper under your hands, as *Gen. 39. 23.* Every thing shall befriend you. Whilst *Solomon* trode in the Steps of his Father, and walked in the Law of God; and neither practised *Idolatry*, nor gave any Countenance, or Allowance, or Toleration thereunto, *There was no Adversary, nor evil Occurrent, or Chance:* for it is the same word with that in my Text: *1 King. 5. 4.* When he forsook the Law of God, the Lord stirred up many Adversaries against him. While he was with God, his Affairs prospered, and were attended with good Succels and a Blessing. So it was with Reforming *Hezekiah*, *2 King. 18. 5, 6, 7.* *2 Chron. 31. 20, 21.* *He trusted in the Lord God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the Kings of Judah, nor any that were before him: For he clave to the Lord, and departed not from following Him; but kept his Commandments which the Lord commanded Moses. And the Lord was with him, and he PROSPERED whithersoever he went forth: &c.* Otherwise, how should men expect to Prosper? *2 Chron. 24. 20.* — *Why transgress ye the Commandments of the Lord, that ye cannot Prosper? because ye have forsaken the Lord, He hath also forsaken you.* We find generally that when Rulers and People walked in God's Law, and kept in with Him, their Affairs prof-

prospered marvellously: when they departed from God, nothing prospered with them; unless it were to their hardening, and Ruine. And the Lord keeps the same Tenour of Dispensations (for the Substance) unto this day. Oh therefore! Let us all account it our best *Policy*, as it is our *Duty*, to please God, that hath the absolute Disposal of us, and all our Affairs. And let it be the Care of our military Men, that they do not make Days of *Training*, and *Preparation* for Warre and real Service, Days of *Provocation* to God. Please God, if you would engage Him on your Side, to govern *Time* and *Chance* to your Advantage. Take heed of making God your Enemy in the days of your Peace and of such Solemnities, by spending them away Idly and Unprofitably, by any unworthy Behaviour, by Intemperance, by excessive Drinking (a Sin grown too much in Fashion with the Generation that is risen up; I wish I might not say, with many loose Church-Members) by idle, rotten, unfavoury Communication, or by any other way of Debauchery, and Provocation: so as to disarm your selves, to make you naked, to lay you open to the Stroke of Divine Vengeance, and to render you Unprosperous and Unhappie men in all your Undertakings. It is a Shame and a Grief to think how such Days as these are many times spent to the Dishonour of God, and the unspeakable Prejudice of the Souls of Men; as well as other Daies of Solemnitie on other Accounts: I beseech you, look to your selves, and do not make Warre upon God this Day, nor *run upon the thick Bosses of His Bucklers*, Job. 15. 25, 26. Do not dishonour and displease Christ, that is God the Father's Viceroy in the World, and governs all Affairs. If you cross Him, and (to speak after the manner of Men) disappoint Him of his Expectations concerning you (as the Lord hath great Expectations of such a People, so Circumstanced) He will have his Time to meet with you, and to cross you in your Designs, and to give you Shame, and Disappointment. I delight not in any pedantick, insipid, trifling Allusions, below the Gravi-

ty of a Sermon: but I cannot better express what I would, than in your own ordinary Phrases, You Gentlemen of the Artillery, and Militia, *Face to your Leader*; or in the Apostle's words, *Look unto Jesus*, Heb. 12. 2. And follow your Leader, your Commander in Chief, the Captain of the Host of the Lord, *Job. 5. 14.* the Lord Jesus Christ, in holiness of Conversation. He was no Glutton, no Wine-bibber, no loose and vain Companion of Sinners, though blasphemously charged with it by his malignant Enemies. He was the greatest *EXAMPLE* that ever was, or will be in the World, of Sobriety, of Gravity, of Seriousness and Diligence in his Work, of prudent and prosperous Management of his Affairs (*Isa. 52. 13.*) of savoury, gracious Communication, and holy Conversation. Learn of Him, and follow His Example, and you shall be Prosperous Men indeed: Yea, let us all take this Counsel and Course. *New-England* hath Enemies enough on Earth, and in Hell: wo to us if we make God in Heaven our Enemy also. *The Lord help us to fear Him, & keep His Commandments, and then we need not be afraid of evil Tidings, or solicitous about Events and Issues of Things: For all the Paths of the Lord shall be Mercy and Truth to us, and Goodness and Mercy shall follow us all our Days: and this we know, that it shall be well with them that fear God.*

FINIS.

Advertisements.

THere is now in the *Press* a Treatise entituled *Covenant-Keeping, the way to Blessedness*, being several Sermons Preached from *PSAL. CIII, XVII, XVIII.* by the Reverend *Mr. Samuel Willard.*